

at his arm-pits, and he was swung from the ledge, glad enough to be away, although a misgiving had arisen whether the sudden jerk would not be too much for the boys above. And so, indeed, it might have been; but a pair of strong, manly arms were assisting the accomplices of his perfidy.

"Rash, foolish boy!" accosted his ears, when he stood, trembling from his exertions and excitement, on the firm, welcome ground above. But his schoolmaster—for he it was who had helped with the rope—was too thankful to have the boy up there safe and sound to say anything just then about his folly, and grasping his hands warmly, the sometimes stern, but oftener gentle-hearted, clergyman quickly added, "Thank God, my lad, you are not a mangled corpse!"

In the meantime, Will Graham had seized the struggling eaglet, and taking to his legs, called upon the others to follow. For skimming over the white-crested sea, as yet some distance off, were the parent birds returning.

Each boy went his own way. They had risen early, and hoped to be back in time for breakfast. Tom had just got home, and was running up the steps, when the door opened, and he met the physician of the neighbourhood.

The doctor stood still for a moment to survey the boy from head to foot; then smiling, asked—"What mad prank have you been up to *now*, young man?"

"Oh, nothing particular," he said, evasively; then quickly, "Is anything wrong with my sister?"

"Yes, she is very ill."

"But she will be all right soon?"

The doctor shook his head gravely.

Tom did not wait to hear anything more. Closing the door, he threw his cap on the hall table, and was about to rush up-stairs to Lizzie's room, when he met his mother coming down.

"Mother," he said, kissing her, "what is wrong with Lizzie?"

"She is very ill;" and the brave mother, who for the last couple of hours had not suffered herself to waste time by useless tears, now laid her troubled brow on her boy's shoulder, and wept.

He tried to comfort her, but the shadow of the coming trial was falling upon him too, and he found it hard, very hard, to say anything to alleviate her grief.

Presently she said—"But where have you been, my boy? Your clothes are torn and dirty."

"On the rocks."

The poor mother was too troubled in mind to make inquiries.

"Lizzie wanted you a few minutes ago. Will you go and see her?"

Tom had bounded up half-a-dozen steps, when he stopped to deliberate. Turning to his mother, he asked, his lips quivering—

"Would it do in an hour's time?"

"Why not now, Tom?"

"I'll tell you, mother dear, when I come back."

Darting through the hall, he left the house, and ran at his topmost speed to Will Graham's home. Having gained access to the house, he broke without ceremony into the breakfast-room.

"Where is Will?" he asked, breathlessly.

"In the yard," replied Will's father, "with a young eagle the foolish boy has somehow captured."

Tom did not wait to hear anything more. Running into the yard, he snatched the poor fluttering bird from a hen-coop, under which young Graham had thrust it.

Without deigning to give his schoolfellow any explanation, Tom bolted through the house, back into the street he had left, and ran off in the direction of the hills overlooking the sea. The bird, wearied with its struggles to

get free, became at length passive enough. But soon after Tom had got into the path that led to the old beacon it suddenly renewed its efforts, and again began to hiss vigorously.

There was a loud scream close behind him. Looking back over his shoulder, Tom instantly dropped his captive. He had scarcely got a dozen yards away from it before the mother bird, with a great swoop, darted to the spot where he had thrown the queer, half-fledged little thing.

Tom was back again at his home within the hour he had spoken of. Learning that Lizzie was not asleep, and that she was still wanting to see him, he went straight to the sick-room.

"Oh, Liz!" he exclaimed, stooping over the pillow, and kissing her with all the hot fervour of his boyish love, "I thought you were dying."

And seating himself on a chair by the bedside, the heaviest portion of his grief vanished with the tears he indulged in for a few seconds.

"Couldn't you spare me, Tom?" she asked, softly, her own eyes filling in sympathy with his.

"No, that I couldn't," he said, impetuously. "And mamma couldn't."

"Perhaps God is not going to take me away from you yet; but if He does, Tom dear, it will be because He loves me, so you must not be very unhappy, and mamma must not be very unhappy. And you will be very good to poor mamma, and you will be brave, Tom, and do what is right, won't you?"

She wanted to say something more, but the effort was too great, for her voice and strength were feeble, so she satisfied herself by stretching out her hot white hand and resting it in his.

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A long weary week dragged out its seven sad, anxious days, during which no one spoke louder than in whispers, for it seemed that the shadow of death hung over the household.

However, at its close, to the doctor's surprise, Lizzie gradually rallied. Throughout that interminable week Tom was at the lowest ebb of despondency—so much so, that when they told him she was out of immediate danger he could not believe it. It was not until repeatedly rushing up-stairs to see with his own eyes that it was really her sweet smiling self who reclined near the sunlit window amidst a pile of shawls and pillows, and after repeatedly clasping her dear thin hand, and looking wistfully into those mild blue eyes of hers, that he became at length convinced.

He had felt, with bitter heart-burnings, what a blank Lizzie's death would leave in their home, and that had set him pondering on the grief he had too probably occasioned in many and many a nesthome. She did not chide him when he told her about the cry, but that made the resolve gradually forming in his mind only the stronger.

"Liz," he said, bursting into her room one bright May morning, with an armful of hawthorn-blossom, "I'll never steal a single egg again."

And he kept his word.

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"There was a young lady of Niger
Who went for a ride on a tiger;
They returned from that ride,
With the lady inside,
And a smile on the face of the tiger."